

/t̥e/

'nose'

/t̥eno/ [t̥eno]

'his nose'

5. PRACTICAL ORTHOGRAPHY

The immediate purpose of this study of Ngalkbun phonology is to provide an alphabet for use in the language "revitalization" programme. There are three main considerations involved in the selection of a practical orthography. The first two are outlined in Velma J. Leeding and Sarah C. Gudschinsky (1974):

- (i) "The orthography should be chosen to make learning to read as easy as possible for the beginner and also to allow the experienced reader to skim and to read new materials smoothly."
- (ii) ". . . the vernacular orthography should facilitate transition into English."
- (iii) Some Aborigines in the Bamyili community are bilingual in Ngalkbun and Maiali, a dialect of Gunwinggu. Gunwinggu has an established orthography and reading materials. It is preferable for the Ngalkbun orthography to parallel that of Gunwinggu so that interference between the two is minimised and reading facilitated for the bilinguals.

It is felt that the orthography selected meets the three considerations above. The only difference between the Ngalkbun orthography and the Gunwinggu is where vowel glides have been interpreted differently because of differences in the structures of the two languages.

Phonemic Orthography

p

t

t̥

t̥

k

ʔ

m

n

nj

Practical Orthography

b

d

dj

rd

k

h

m

n

nj

Phonemic
Orthography

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y

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i

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Practical
Orthography

rn

ng

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rl

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o

FOOTNOTES

1. This does not include clusters word final with /ʔ/ as the second consonant. The distribution of /ʔ/ in that position has not been thoroughly checked out.
2. The phoneme /ɽ/ may have an allophone, viz., voiced retroflexed flapped resonant [ɽ̣]. It is possible that the phonetic quality is more accurately described as [ɽ̣]. This allophone varies with [ɽ] between vowels, but no satisfactory statement about its distribution can be made at this time. /kuɽupu/ [kuɽ̣ubu/kuɽubu] 'plains kangaroo (male)'

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